Dear Faithful Bookseller,

A few years ago, a writer-friend showed me a graph that mapped the number of published books each year against the North American population. In 1913 there were 1,300 readers for every book published. That was somewhat of an amazing statistic. Over the twentieth century both population and publications grew, of course, but in the twenty-first century the numbers were stunning: there are more books published today than there are available readers to read them. My friend pointed to it and said: “That’s what we’re up against.”

At BookThug we continue to respond to the overwhelming number of books readers have to choose from by publishing strong and culturally relevant work that stands out. Our spring and summer releases for 2017 are no different: Within these pages you’ll find a gathering of incredible new books that have been selected by our editorial team for your most discerning readers. From Oisín Curran’s fantastical novel Blood Fable, to Marianne Apostolides’ crushingly vulnerable memoir Deep Salt Water, to Jennifer LoveGrove’s haunting and mesmerizing poetry collection Beautiful Children With Pet Foxes, we know that we’re offering books that are sure to entice the readers who shop in your store.

But that is just our frontlist. Turning further through this catalogue you’ll discover more titles that feature timely, contemporary literature. M. NourbeSe Philip is back with a new book—her first book published in Canada in more than ten years! Blank: Interviews & Essays is the third volume in our popular new Essais Series. Following in the footsteps of Her Paraphernalia: On Motherlines, Blood/Sex/Loss & Selfies by Margaret Christakos and Notes from a Feminist Killjoy: Essays on Everyday Life by Erin Wunker, Philip’s new book tackles issues of race, art, and the body politic and will undoubtedly continue the necessary conversations that the Essais Series wants to create.

There are two new works of fiction in the mix, one by a new face and one by a familiar author. Angela Lopes’ debut novel Bridge Retakes is a millennial long distance love affair that tackles issues of class, gender, religion, and geography. And BookThug is pleased to welcome back Bertrand Laverdure (and his translator Oana Avasilichioaei) with Readopolis, the latest in our Literature in Translation Series.

We’ve also gathered another amazing group of poets, new and established—from familiar faces like Stephen Cain and Christine McNair, to new voices like Erin Robinson and Leanne Dunic. We even have some fabulous established voices new to BookThug: Jennifer Still and Divya Victor. Each one of these poets’ books captures a slice of the human world we live in from a unique point of view with vitality and verve.

We’re confident that every one of the books in this catalogue will continue to contribute to a rich conversation about what it means to be alive now. We know how well you curate your store; as publishers, we too are curators as we create our publishing program. From everyone at BookThug who works tirelessly to get these necessary books into the hands of readers, we thank you for continuing to peruse our catalogues and ordering books for your shelves.

Jay and Hazel Millar
Blood Fable
Oisín Curran


In 1980, a utopian Buddhist community on the coast of Maine called New Pond is on the verge of collapse. New Pond’s charismatic leader demands complete adherence to his authority, and slowly, his followers come to the realization that they’ve been exploited for too long. The eleven-year-old son of one of those adherents is dimly aware of the concerns of the adult world. Yet his imagination provides a refuge both from the difficulties of his parents’ lives—including his mother’s newly discovered cancer—and from the boredom and casual brutality of school.

To distract his parents and himself from their collective troubles, the boy claims to remember his own life before birth. His purported memory, which is the story within the story of Blood Fable, is an epic tale about the search for a lost city refracted through the lens of the adventure stories he loves. As the world around them falls apart, the boy and his parents find that his strange story often seems to predict the events taking place in the world around them.

Praise for Mopus:

“Mopus is powerful, furious, and strange.”
—CBC: Canada Writes

“One of the best, genuinely experimental novels I’ve read in a long time… a daring and ambitious book.”
—Eugene Lim, author of The Strangers

Oisín Curran grew up in rural Maine. He received a BA in Classics and an MFA in Creative Writing from Brown University (where he was the recipient of a national scholarship and a writing fellowship), and a diploma in Translation (French to English) from Concordia University. He is the author of Mopus (2008) and was named a “Writer to Watch” by CBC: Canada Writes. Curran lives in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, with his wife and two children.
Deep Salt Water
Marianne Apostolides

Deep Salt Water is an intimate memoir about abortion, expressed through a layering of language and imagery of the ocean. The story gravitates around the reconnection and ongoing entanglements of a couple who’d had an abortion twenty years earlier. Interdisciplinary in nature and entre-genre in style, Deep Salt Water is organized as thirty-seven separate pieces, divided into three sections (or ‘trimesters’) that detail the couple’s love affair and unwanted pregnancy; the abortion itself; their separation and tenuous reconnection; and the sorrowful, urgent attempt to come to terms with the abortion and its consequences.

Included in its pages are two innovative elements—a series of collages by visual artist Catherine Mellinger and a section entitled the ‘Afterbirth,’ which discusses environmental issues that informed Apostolides’ writing and moves the book from a place of intense intimacy to an outward focus that engages with the broader world and our shared responsibility and hope.

Praise for Marianne Apostolides:

“Apostolides’ prose delights and takes pleasure in the slipperiness of language itself.”
—Canadian Literature

“Apostolides is a kind of fan dancer among thematic imponderables.”
—The Globe and Mail

A recipient of the Chalmers Arts Fellowship, Marianne Apostolides is the author of six books, including three critically-acclaimed titles published by BookThug: Swim, Voluptuous Pleasure (listed among the Top 100 Books of 2012 by Toronto’s The Globe and Mail), and Sophrosyne. Marianne lives in Toronto with her two children. Learn more on her website: marianne-apostolides.com.
Beautiful Children with Pet Foxes
Jennifer LoveGrove

Beautiful Children with Pet Foxes, the new collection of poetry from Giller Prize–longlisted writer Jennifer LoveGrove, attempts to make sense of a difficult and unsettling world, where one need not look much further than their own communities to witness acts of trauma and absurdity.

Here, we’re haunted by the ghosts of alienation, trauma, delusion, and fear that the past decade has instilled in us, and bear witness to moments of extreme crisis—in emotional breakdowns, the failures of the mental health system, the lack of support for the most vulnerable members of society, and the impact of psychosis not only on the ill but on those orbiting them.

With inventive and startling imagery and logic, we’re led on an odyssey through the terrain of startling dreamscapes, where a whole host of personas, both tame and wild—from humans, to foxes, moose, deer and crows, slugs, fish, beetles, mosquitos, earthworms, and more—give voice to the things we can’t express in our daily lives.

Praise for Watch How We Walk:

“Watch How We Walk is a thoughtful, well-crafted and impressive debut.”
—The Globe and Mail

“Blisteringly gorgeous prose.”
—Publishers Weekly

“Sometimes a book is so clear, so well-constructed, that it’s impossible to look away, even when looking away might be better for you. Jennifer LoveGrove’s Watch How We Walk is, for the most part, this kind of hard.”
—National Post

Jennifer LoveGrove is the author of the Giller Prize–longlisted novel Watch How We Walk, as well as two poetry collections: I Should Never Have Fired the Sentinel and The Dagger Between Her Teeth. In 2010, LoveGrove was nominated for the K.M. Hunter Artist Award for Literature and in 2015, her poetry was shortlisted for the Lit POP Awards. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications across North America. She divides her time between downtown Toronto and rural Ontario.
Blank: Interviews & Essays
M. NourbeSe Philip

Blank is a collection of previously out-of-print essays and new works by one of Canada’s most important contemporary writers and thinkers.

Through an engagement with her earlier work, M. NourbeSe Philip comes to realize the existence of a repetition in the world: the return of something that, while still present, has become unembedded from the world, disappeared. Her imperative becomes to make us see what has gone unseen, by writing memory upon the margin of history, in the shadow of empire and at the frontier of silence.

In heretical writings that work to make the disappeared perceptible, Blank explores questions of race, the body politic, timeliness, recurrence, ongoingness, art, and the so-called multicultural nation. Through these considerations, Philip creates a linguistic form that registers the presence of what has seemingly dissolved, a form that also imprints the loss and the silence surrounding those disappearances in its very presence.

Praise for M. NourbeSe Philip:

“Philip’s questions are difficult, and of an intensity of insistence rarely achieved.”
—Erin Mouré

“Those still confused about why poetry might fracture and splinter and stutter can find an answer in the work of M. NourbeSe Philip.”
—Juliana Spahr

M. NourbeSe Philip is a poet, essayist, novelist, playwright, and former lawyer who lives in Toronto. She is a Fellow of the Guggenheim and Rockefeller (Bellagio) Foundations, and the MacDowell Colony. She is the recipient of many awards, including the Casa de las Americas prize (Cuba). Among her best-known works are: She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks, Looking for Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence, and Zong!, a genre-breaking poem that engages with ideas of the law, history, and memory as they relate to the transatlantic slave trade.
Readopolis

Bertrand Laverdure
Translated by Oana Avasilichioaei

From award-winning writer Bertrand Laverdure comes Readopolis, a novel translated by Oana Avasilichioaei.

It’s 2006 and down-and-out protagonist Ghislain works as a reader for a publishing house in Montreal. He’s bored with all the wannabe writers who are determined to leave a trace of their passage on earth with their feeble attempts at literary arts. Obsessed by literature and its future (or lack thereof), he reads everything he can in order to translate reality into the literary delirium that is Readopolis—a world imagined out of Chicago and Montreal, with few inhabitants, a convenience store, a parrot, and all kinds of dialogues running amok: cinematic, epistolary, theatrical, and Socratic.

In the pages of Readopolis (Lectodôme in the original French), Laverdure playfully examines the idea that human beings are more connected by their reading abilities than by anything else. Funny and sardonic, whimsical and tragic, this postmodern novel with touches of David Foster Wallace and Raymond Queneau portrays the global village of readers that the Internet created, even before the 2.0 revolution.

Praise for Lectodôme:

“Brilliant, playful, perfectly convincing, Lectodôme has everything to place Laverdure in the ranks of the ‘sickest literary greats.’”

—Le Devoir


Montreal-based writer, translator, and editor Oana Avasilichioaei has published five poetry collections, including Expeditions of a Chimera (with Erin Moure; 2009), We, Beasts (2012; winner of the A.M. Klein Prize for Poetry from the Quebec Writers’ Federation) and Liminal (2015). Previous translations include Bertrand Laverdure’s Universal Bureau of Copyrights (2014; shortlisted for the 2015 ReLit Awards), Suzanne Leblanc’s The Thought House of Philippa (co-translated with Ingrid Pam Dick; 2015), and Daniel Canty’s Wigrum (2013).
FICION

Bridge Retakes
Angela Lopes

*Bridge Retakes*, the debut novel by Angela Lopes, is a whirlwind millennial tale of love and family and the distances that people will (or won’t) go to secure what they want.

A Bahian man and a Brazilian-Canadian woman meet on an online dating site. They come from very different worlds—geographically, economically, religiously—and yet, their connection is undeniable. When these long-distance lovers run up against their own belief systems and those of their families and communities, it’s their desire to build a life anew that keeps them moving forward. But all the while, issues of money, class, gender, and corruption threaten to tear them apart.

**Praise for Bridge Retakes:**

“This is the story of Phila + Ze, of Canada + Brazil. And like all great love stories it charts the emotions around desire, all its sweats and confusions. And it does this beautifully. What Phila + Ze = is the plot of this book. And as such, what Bridge Retakes adds to these stories and what makes it distinctive is how these sweats and confusions are shaped by more complicated forces, such as national borders and economic inequalities.”

—Juliana Spahr

Winnipeg-based Angela Lopes is a writer, and editor, and academic tutor of writing and philosophy. She divides her time between São Paulo, Brazil and Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she is an active member in the arts scene and recently worked with the Winnipeg Arts Council’s Creative Placemaking Challenge—an art installation project displayed in the alleys of the city’s West Exchange District. Lopes’s essays and poems have appeared in an array of publications. *Bridge Retakes* is her first novel.
False Friends
Stephen Cain

False Friends is the first full-length poetry collection from Stephen Cain in more than ten years. In it, he takes inspiration from the linguistic term “false friends”—two words from different languages that appear to be related, but have fundamentally different meanings. In this book are poems both humourous and unforgiving that Cain uses to explore errors, misapprehensions, and mistranslations and offer insights into the “secret operations” hiding within everyday language.

These poems spin punk with pastoral, comic book with lyric, the misunderstood with the obvious. And at its core, False Friends is a thought-provoking investigation of the power of poetry as political discourse.

Praise for I Can Say Interpellation:

“Parody with a healthy dose of moral outrage.”
—4 Mothers Blog

“Cain has the delightful way of spinning each tale to suit his purpose and the results are often as hilarious as they are uncomfortably recognizable.”
—Broken Pencil

Charm
Christine McNair

A charm can protect, inflict or influence.

Charm, the second collection by poet Christine McNair, considers the craftwork of conception from a variety of viewpoints—from pregnancy and motherhood, to how an orchid is pollinated, to overcoming abusive family relationships, to the manual artistry of carving a violin bow or marbling endpapers.

Through these works, McNair’s poetic line evolves as if moving in a spellbound kaleidoscope, etched with omens, fairytales, intimacy’s stickiness, and the mothering body.

Praise for Conflict:
“A knockout debut. Christine McNair is a one-woman fireworks spectacle.”
—Grady Harp, Literary Aficionado

“Christine McNair is going to write poetry that will both entertain and illuminate us if Conflict is any indication.”
—Michael Dennis, Today’s Book of Poetry

Christine McNair is the author of Conflict (BookThug, 2012; finalist for the City of Ottawa Book Award, the Archibald Lampman Award, and the ReLit Award, and shortlisted for the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry) and pleasantries and other misdemeanours (2013; shortlisted for the bpNichol chapbook award). Her work has appeared in Arc Poetry Magazine, CV2, Descant, Poetry is Dead, Prairie Fire, and other places. McNair lives in Ottawa, where she works as a book doctor.
It was a long silence that brought me to the erasure poem. Not mine, but my brother’s, during his many months in a coma. I came across a notebook of his—a pocket-sized, handwritten field guide of prairie grasses. I read it for companionship, signs of consciousness, attention. I read it for the rhythms of his still and distant hand…. I was reading a taxonomy of grief: silique drifted into soliloquy.

Between 2008 and 2014, while her brother was in a lengthy coma, award-winning poet Jennifer Still engaged in a private collaboration with the art and wonder that was his handwritten field guide of prairie grasses. The result: the stunning works of poetry and imagery encapsulated in *Comma*.

Still was moved by an overarching impulse of grief to create these poems. In the brittle lexicon of botany, and in the hum of the machines keeping her brother alive, she developed a hands-on method of composition that plays with the possibilities of what can be ‘read’ on a page. *Comma* enacts a state of transformation and flux, all in an effort to portray the embodiment of grief and regeneration that can be achieved in the physical breakdown and reassembly of lyric poetic forms.

**Praise for Comma:**

“*Comma* is a living, breathing field guide to the unconscious—Still’s poems flicker and leap from the page. This collection is an immersive, tactile wonder, a compassionate, steadfast companion: a truly remarkable exploration by a truly remarkable artist.”

—Christine Fellows, singer/songwriter/poet and author of *Burning Daylight*
Rag Cosmology
Erin Robinsong

BookThug is proud to introduce a groundbreaking debut collection of poems by Erin Robinsong. In this time of ecological precarity, *Rag Cosmology* is an urgent invitation to reinvent our modes of engagement with the environment we not only inhabit, but are. Refusing the lamentation that leaves us as resigned witnesses to devastation, *Rag Cosmology* counters fatalist narratives with the pleasures of ecological entanglement and engagement.

Tracing relationships between seemingly irreconcilable things—economy and ecology, weather and lust, bills and inner voices, wages of avoidance and wages of listening—*Rag Cosmology* offers the intimate and lush language of thought that yearns for an imaginative reinvention of how we understand what we are part of and what we are losing.

Erin Robinsong is a poet and interdisciplinary artist. She is the author of four chapbooks, and her work has appeared in journals across Canada and onstage at the &NOW Festival of New Writing, the Conference on Ecopoetics, and other events. Originally from British Columbia, Robinsong lives between Toronto and Montreal. *Rag Cosmology* is her first book.
To Love the Coming End
Leanne Dunic

An unnamed narrator—a disillusioned author obsessed with natural disasters and ‘the curse of 11’—reflects on their own personal earthquake: the loss of a loved one. In To Love the Coming End, a lyric travelogue/story with a Lost in Translation vibe, Vancouver-based writer and artist Leanne Dunic presents an exploration of loss, identity, and environment, where landscapes and emotion are linked through the narrator’s wry observations and experiences.

In inventive prose that travels between Singapore, Canada, and Japan, To Love the Coming End offers a dreamlike narrative that reminds readers of our multi-planed and fragile connections and disconnections. Readers with interests in issues of identity, and audiences from cross-cultural backgrounds will be intrigued by the qualities of Dunic’s writing that visually capture what it’s like to be united while simultaneously separated from the global experience of trauma, history, and loss that colour our everyday lives.

Praise for To Love the Coming End:
“Leanne Dunic's meditative collection To Love the Coming End embodies Yukio Mishima's characterization of Japan—her writing is at once elegant and brutal. In these fervent poems of disparate landscapes are catastrophic feelings of sadness, loss, and alienation.”
—Doretta Lau, author of How Does a Single Blade of Grass Thank the Sun?

“Elegant and spare, Dunic's elegiac writing touches on grief that is both personal and societal. She reminds us that no love is wasted.”
—Yi-Mei Tsiang, author of Sweet Devilry

Leanne Dunic is a multidisciplinary artist, musician, and writer based in Vancouver, British Columbia. In 2015, Leanne won the Alice Munro Short Story Prize (judged by Lisa Moore) and was shortlisted for the Asian-Canadian Emerging Writer Award. Her work has been published in various magazines and anthologies, including Cascadia Review, Lemon Hound, Ricepaper Magazine, and the Quarterly Literary Review Singapore. She is the singer/guitarist of the band The Deep Cove and is the Artistic Director of the Powell Street Festival Society in Vancouver. To Love the Coming End is her first book.
Kith
Divya Victor

*kith* [noun] one’s friends, acquaintances, neighbours, or relations.

In *Kith*, award-winning writer Divya Victor engages Indian-American diasporic culture in the twentieth century, via an autobiographical account that explores what ‘kith’ might mean outside of the national boundaries of those people belonging to the Indian and Southeast Asian diasporas.

Through an engagement with the effects of globalization on identity formation, cultural and linguistic exchange, and demographic difference, *Kith* explores questions about race and ethnic difference: How do ‘brownness’ and ‘blackness’ emerge as traded commodities in the transactions of globalization? What are the symptoms of belonging? How and why does ‘kith’ diverge from ‘kin,’ and what are the affects and politics of this divergence? Historically-placed and well-researched, *Kith* is an unflinching and simultaneous account of both systemic and interpersonal forms of violence and wounding in the world today.

Praise for Divya Victor:

“Victor’s poems present back onto us the processes of our modern world, stripping them bare, rid of all affect. They are meticulous, subversive, and razor-sharp.”
—Michael Nardone, editor, *Hobo Magazine, Jacket2, Amodern*

“If Victor’s writing sounds harrowing—it is. But it is also terrifically magnetic, glowing with intelligence, elegance, and control.”
—Sueyeun Juliette Lee, in *The Constant Critic*

Divya Victor is the two-time Pushcart-nominated author of several books and chapbooks, including *Natural Subjects* (winner of the Bob Kaufman Award), *UNSUB*, and *Things To Do With Your Mouth*. Her chapbooks include *Semblance*, *Hellocasts* by Charles Reznikoff by Divya Victor by Vanessa Place, and *SUTURES*. She was born in southern India and lives in the US and Singapore, where she is Assistant Professor of Poetry and Writing at Nanyang Technological University.
Nonfiction

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An engaging look at why feminism is still very necessary.

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